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sending the requested content to the client system.

**AN, NYDEGGER &  
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
1000 EAGLE GATE TOWER  
60 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84**

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5. A method as recited in claim 4 wherein the list of back-end servers is identified in a hypertext transfer protocol 305 Use Proxy response from the particular back-end server.

6. A method as recited in claim 4 further comprising the acts of:

requesting authentication credentials from the client system; and

receiving proper authentication credentials from the client system.

7. A method as recited in claim 6 further comprising the acts of:

receiving an authentication token that is associated with the authentication credentials; and

using the authentication token as a key for a hash operation to identify the redirect back-end server from the list of back-end servers identified in the redirect response.

8. A method as recited in claim 1 wherein the redirect response identifies a single back-end server where the content is stored.

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10. A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the acts of:  
receiving the requested content from the redirect back-end server; and  
sending the requested content to the client system.

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1 11. In a computerized system that includes a client system, a front-end server, and  
2 one or more back-end servers, all interconnected with a communication link, wherein the  
3 client system periodically accesses content stored on one or more back-end servers through  
4 the front-end server, and wherein over time the content may be moved from one back-end  
5 server to another or may appear to be stored at a back-end server when in fact the content is  
6 not stored at that back-end server, a method of redirecting a request for the content directed  
7 to a particular back-end server when the content is not stored at the particular back-end  
8 server, the method comprising the back-end server performing the acts of:

9 receiving a content request from the client system through the front-end  
10 server, the content request including a front-end indicator in order to indicate that the  
11 front-end server is making the content request on behalf of the client system;

12 examining the content request for the front-end indicator;

13 the front-end indicator having been present in the content request, creating a  
14 redirect response to the content request that includes a list of one or more redirect  
15 back-end servers where the content is stored; and

16 sending the redirect response to the front-end server so that the front-end  
17 server can redirect the request to the one or more redirect back-end servers.

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19 12. A method as recited in claim 11 wherein the front-end indicator is added to a  
20 hypertext transfer protocol User Agent header.

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22 13. A method as recited in claim 11 wherein the list of one or more redirect back-end  
23 servers is identified in a hypertext transfer protocol 305 Use Proxy response from the  
24 particular back-end server.

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1 14. In a computerized system that includes a client system, a front-end server, and  
2 one or more back-end servers, all interconnected with a communication link, wherein the  
3 client system periodically accesses content stored on the one or more back-end servers  
4 through the front-end server, and wherein over time the content may be moved from one  
5 back-end server to another or may appear to be stored at a back-end server when in fact the  
6 content is not stored at that back-end server, a method of transparently redirecting a request  
7 for the content such that the client system is unaware of the redirection, the method  
8 comprising the front-end server performing:

9 an act of receiving a request for the content from the client system;

10 a step for querying a particular back-end server for the requested content,  
11 wherein the response to the query identifies one or more other back-end servers  
12 where the content is stored;

13 a step for, automatically and without user intervention, retrieving the  
14 requested content from a redirect back-end server, the redirect back-end server being  
15 one of the one or more other back-end servers identified in the redirect response; and

16 an act of sending the requested content to the client system.

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18 15. A method as recited in claim 14 further comprising a step for authenticating the  
19 client system.

20  
21 16. A method as recited in claim 15 wherein the query response identifies a list of  
22 back-end servers where the content is stored, the method further comprising a step for  
23 distributing the request to the redirect back-end server based on the client system  
24 authentication.

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17. A method as recited in claim 14 wherein the query response identifies a single  
back-end servers where the content is stored.



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1 20. A method as recited in claim 19 wherein the redirect response from the particular  
2 back-end server identifies a list of back-end servers where the content is stored.

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4 21. A method as recited in claim 20 further comprising the acts of:

5 the front-end server requesting authentication credentials from the client  
6 system; and

7 the front-end server receiving proper authentication credentials from the  
8 client system.

9  
10 22. A method as recited in claim 21 further comprising the acts of:

11 the front-end server receiving an authentication token that is associated with  
12 the authentication credentials; and

13 the front-end server using the authentication token as a key for a hash  
14 operation to identify the redirect back-end server from the list of back-end servers  
15 identified in the redirect response.

16  
17 23. A method as recited in claim 18 wherein the redirect response from the particular  
18 back-end server identifies a single back-end server where the content is stored.

19  
20 24. A method as recited in claim 18, further comprising the acts of:

21 the front-end server receiving the requested content from the redirect  
22 back-end server; and

23 the front-end server sending the requested content to the client  
24 system.



25. In a computerized system that includes a client system, a front-end server, and one or more back-end servers, all interconnected with a communication link, wherein the client system periodically accesses content stored on the one or more back-end servers through the front-end server, and wherein over time the content may be moved from one back-end server to another or may appear to be stored at a back-end server when in fact the content is not stored at that back-end server, a computer program product for implementing a method of transparently redirecting a request for the content such that the client system is unaware of the redirection, comprising:

a computer readable medium for carrying machine-executable instructions for implementing the method; and

wherein said method is comprised of machine-executable instructions for the front-end server performing the acts of:

receiving a request for the content from the client system;

directing the request to a particular back-end server;

receiving from the particular back-end server, a redirect response identifying one or more other back-end servers where the content is stored;

automatically and without client system intervention, redirecting the request to a redirect back-end server, the redirect back-end server being one of the one or more other back-end servers identified in the redirect response;

receiving the requested content from the redirect back-end server; and

sending the requested content to the client system.

30. A computer program product as recited in claim 25, wherein the redirect response identifies a single back-end server where the content is stored.



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32. A method as recited in claim 31 wherein the front-end indicator is added to a  
hypertext transfer protocol User Agent header.

33. A method as recited in claim 31 wherein the list of one or more redirect back-end  
servers is identified in a hypertext transfer protocol 305 Use Proxy response from the  
particular back-end server.